



**PRESENTS:**



# **MINÁČI KIŇ DOWÁN** **A ZITKÁLA-ŠÁ OPERA**

**A Film by Sequoia Hauck**

**Music by Lyz Jaakola | Libretto by Hannah Johnson**





## A Note From

### The Artistic Producer, Director, and Filmmaker

The journey of creating this cinematic opera has been one that feels as if I have grown 100 years. The wisdom and knowledge that elders, friends, and ancestors have given are ever-present. When I first discovered Zitkála-Šá's story, her passion for her people and community is what spoke to me the most.

When I first discovered Zitkála-Šá's story, I went to my friend Hannah Johnson asking if she knew who Zitkála-Šá was...neither of us did at the time.

Hannah then almost immediately created a tune on the piano from saying "Zitkála-Šá" over and over again. Right then I knew that if her name alone could inspire this, it could inspire so much more.

Minái Kiŋ Dowánj: A Zitkála-Šá Opera is not only the story of Zitkála-Šá but the story of each of us as contemporary Native artists celebrating who we are and celebrating the people and ancestors who have come before us and that will come after us.

For me and for many of us in this project this opera has reminded us that work like this is for us. Opera has and will always be storytelling through music. Music is storytelling. Storytelling is for the spirit.

The story of Zitkála-Šá does not end here. To me this is the start of sharing her story and the start of many more stories to come.

Sequoia Hauck ✨





## Zitkála-Šá's Timeline

- 1876 Born
- 1884 Left the reservation to attend boarding school
- 1897 Teacher at Carlisle Indian School
- 1900 Published "Exposés About the Trauma of Boarding Schools" in *Atlantic Monthly*  
  
Played violin in the oval office
- 1901 Published *Old Indian Legends*
- 1902 Married Raymond Talesfase Bonnin  
  
Moved to Utah  
  
Became correspondent for the Society of American Indians
- 1913 Premiered *The Sun Dance Opera*
- 1916 Became Secretary for the Society of American Indians  
  
Moved to Washington D.C.
- 1918 Editor of *American Indian Magazine*
- 1924 Published *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians, an Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes, Legalized Robbery*
- 1926 Co-founded the National Council of American Indians
- 1938 Passed on

## Zitkála-Šá

Zitkála-Šá, (1876–1938), was born on the Yankton Reservation in South Dakota and left when she was eight years old to go to "the land of red apples" to attend a boarding school in Indiana where, as she later wrote, "was treated like an animal." It was during her years at boarding school that she discovered her passion and boundless talents for music, specifically violin and piano.

She studied at the New England Conservatory of Music and upon graduating took a job as the music teacher at the infamous Carlisle Indian Industrial School in the hopes of creating a better environment for the children than she herself had experienced. She began her writings on Native American life to break down the racist stereotypes while also criticizing the boarding school system. Her writings gained national attention and were regularly published in Harper's Monthly.

In 1913 she wrote and composed *The Sun Dance Opera*. Following

its premiere, Zitkála-Šá moved to Washington D. C. where she became secretary for the Society of American Indians, the first national rights organization run by and for American Indians, and edited its publication *American Indian Magazine*.

In 1926, she co-founded the National Council of American Indians to lobby for increased political power for American Indians and the preservation of American Indian heritage and traditions. She served as president of the council until her death in 1938.

Read more [here](#)

## Creators

**Artistic Producer,  
Director, Filmmaker**  
Sequoia Hauck  
*Anishinaabe & Hupa*

**Composer**  
Lyz Jaakola  
*Fond du Lac Anishinaabe*

**Librettist**  
Hannah Johnson  
*Anishinaabe-Bois Forte  
Band of Ojibwe*

**Visual Artist**  
Moira Villiard  
*Fond du Lac direct  
descendant*

## Cast

**Adrienne Zimiga-January**  
*Oglala Lakota*

**Jagger Jaakola-Ripley**  
*Enrolled Arikara./Anishinaabe/  
Santee descendant*

**Jaysalynn Western Boy**  
*Bdewákhawthunwan  
k'a Thithunwan/  
Thíŋta wíta oyánke*

**Lorna "Emmy" Her  
Many Horses**  
*Sicangu and Oglala  
Lakota, Citizen of the  
Rosebud Sioux Tribe*

## Instrumentals

**Flute**  
Lyz Jaakola  
*Fond du Lac Anishinaabe*

**Hand Drums**  
Oshkii Giizhik Singers

**Piano**  
Franco Holder

**Recording Rehearsal Pianist**  
Jenni LeGarde  
*Anishinaabe-Grand  
Portage Band of Ojibwe*

**Violin**  
Marco Real-d'Arbelles

## Production Team

**Audio & Studio Engineer**  
Shandelle Friedman  
*Fond du Lac Anishinaabe*

**Audio Production Engineer**  
Marino Spencer  
*Diné*

**Dakota Language Consultant**  
Summer DuMarce  
*Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate*

**Dandelion Illustrator**  
Millie Richard  
*Long Plain First Nation  
Dakota/ Ojibway*

**Executive Producer**  
Kelly M. Turpin

**Film Editor**  
Courtney Cochran  
*Anishinaabe*

**Libretto Dakota translator**  
Šišóka Dúta  
*Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate*

**Music Director**  
Thomas Draskovic  
*Húnkpapha Lakhóta/  
Wahpé Khúte Dakhóta*

**Rotoscope & Prep Artist**  
Kevin Chiu Films LLC

# Biographies



**Adrienne Zimiga-January (she/her)**

**Oglala Lakota – Napé Wasté Win**

Adrienne has been creating and performing in the Twin Cities for a decade working with

various theater companies such as New Native Theater, Bedlam Theater, Raving Natives Theater, Oyaté Hotanin, Pangea World Theater, Turtle Theater Collective, The History Theater and The Guthrie Theater. A few of her theatrical performances include 2012: The Musical, You Are My Sunshine, Bring the Children Home, Oyaté Hotanin's Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration, Our Town, The Dakota Project, Stories From the Drum, and most recently For the People.

A professional creative director and graphic designer by day (and some occasionally long nights), Adrienne is also a member of The Guthrie Theater's Native Advisory Council collaborating with other First Nations community members to help decolonize spaces and open doors for indigenous performers and creators as well as create a welcoming environment for our indigenous community to attend and be a part of the theater family here in the Twin Cities. Her passion is working with various Native organizations and communities on and off reservations in South Dakota where she is a citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation. Adrienne created the "You Are On Native Land" merchandise that is currently sold in the Guthrie Theater's gift shop where 100% of all profits go to Ikidowin, a BIPOC youth acting ensemble here in Minneapolis.

She lives in St. Paul with her husband Cortez and their two dogs Binney and Max.

I'd like to say WOPILA! to my family and friends for their support as well as to the new friendships I've made during this production. What an amazing group of people to create and share with. I would also like to give an extra big wopila to mit'áncalapi Marisa Carr and Emmy Her Many Horses for always inspiring me and being a part of my life both creatively and personally.



**Emmy Her Many Horses (she/her)**

Emmy Her Many Horses (Sicangu/Oglala Lakota), a citizen of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, is an educator, singer, performer, reader, writer, maker,

and Auntie. Emmy has been acting and singing off and on since childhood, with vocal performances at the White House, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Crazy Horse Memorial, Native POP, on stage with New Native Theatre, and on screen in The Jingle Dress. She has a passion for telling stories by and for Native people and uplifting Rez Kids, the disabled community, and Native artists.

I'd like to say thank you to every teacher that has made me and other rez kids want to put music into the world

Mom - thank you for driving me hours away to voice lessons, making me practice, and encouraging me to sing.





**Franco Holder  
(he/him)**

Franco Holder is a freelance pianist and teacher in the Twin Cities. In 2020 he was a featured recording artist for the Schubert Club Museum's exhibit on

classical women composers. He has performed in collaboration with the Guthrie Theater, Ordway Theater, and is a past Artistic Ambassador for the state of Minnesota, bringing classical music to rural and underserved communities across the state. Franco enjoys teaching, maintaining an active studio, and is on faculty at Walker West Music Academy and St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists.



**Hannah Johnson  
(she/her)**

Hannah Johnson is an Anishinaabekwe from the Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe with a bachelor's degree in Native American and Indigenous Studies. Hannah

is pursuing a Masters in Development Practice: Indigenous Development from the University of Winnipeg, and is excited to graduate after May of 2023! After a year traveling to and from Winnipeg, Hannah is thrilled to be back in Minnesota full-time as she finishes her degree remotely from Duluth. Being involved in the Zitkala-Sa opera is very special to Hannah, as this is not only her first libretto, but the first creative project she's had the pleasure of putting on her resume. She's also in the process of writing a book with her sister, which has been both fun and educational. Hannah loves canoing, hiking, writing, composing music, reading, and catching up on Netflix series. Hannah enjoys taking her dogs, Toby and Cedar, on long walks in the woods.



**Jagger Ripley-Jaakola  
(she/her)**

Jagger Ripley-Jaakola (enrolled Arikara./ Anishinaabe/Santee descendant) age 10, lives on Fond du Lac Reservation with her parents, siblings and lovable doodle, Lupin.

Jagger loves to read (especially Harry Potter), sing and draw. She has been singing for the water since birth and enjoys performing, especially in meaningful Indigenous stories.



**Jaysalynn  
Western Boy  
(she/her)**

Hą́j Mitákuyepi. Dakhóta iá "Mató nážin ohitika wiŋ" emákiyapi ye tkhá wašiču iá "Jaysalynn Western Boy" emákiyapi ye. Damákhota

k'a malákota. Oyáte mitháwa kiŋ Bdewákhą́thųwą́j k'a Thithųwą́j ewíchakiyapi. Bdewákhą́thųwą́j oyáte héchiya taŋháŋ wahí. Thiŋta wita oyą́ŋke héchiya taŋháŋ wahí k'a ed omáwapi. Hémnichą́j othųŋwe ed mathųŋpi tkhá Thiŋta wita ed imáchae. Iyówa k'a Thiŋta wita oyą́ŋke ed wathí. Waniyetu wikčémna manųŋpa. Iyówa Wóųŋspe Waŋkántuya ed wabdáwa ye.

In the previous paragraph, Jaysalynn Western Boy introduced themselves in their native language of Dakhóta. Jaysalynn Western Boy comes from both ends of the Great Sioux Nation.

Singing is way for Jaysalynn Western Boy to express themselves. They have always loved music and has been singing throughout their whole life. For around 10 years, they have been singing in an organized choir.

They are super excited to bring this project to life. Native American representation in film and other art forms is very important to Jaysalynn Western Boy.

Jaysalynn Western Boy is currently studying to become a nurse at the University of Iowa.



**Elizabeth  
"Lyz" Jaakola  
(she/her)**

Elizabeth "Lyz" Jaakola is a musician and educator, and an enrolled member of the Fond du Lac band of Lake Superior Ojibwe in Cloquet, MN.

She teaches Music, American Indian studies & Media Production at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. She performs and composes in many styles and genres including traditional Anishinaabe music, jazz, blues and opera, her Native-based compositions have also been heard on radio and television. Lyz is always striving to promote Anishinaabe music and education through her collaborations, performances, and composition.

Her career spans numerous programs with Arrowhead Chorale, Echoes of Peace Choir, KBEM jazz radio, and many districts in Minnesota while a musical relationship with Finland includes performances with YLE, WSOY and a FINtango residency. Awards are not the reason Lyz works, but she has received 2009 Native American Music Award, 2012 First Peoples' Fund Community Spirit Award, 2013 Sally Ordway Irvine Award, Arrowhead Regional Arts 2014 George Morrison Artist Award, Classical MPR's 2013-2014 Class Notes Artist, 2018 AICF Educator of the Year.

As well as being a mother, wife and daughter, last year, Lyz ran and was elected to the Cloquet City Council representing Ward 5.



**Marco Real-d'Arbelles  
(he/him)**

Conductor and violinist, Marco Real-d'Arbelles, is gaining a reputation for service and community building through music garnering multiple awards including

the Conducting Prize for his work with the Chamber Philharmonic of Catalunya (Spain), Special Recognition by the City of Doral (Florida) for contributions to the arts and his work with youth, and is a grant recipient of the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council and the Minnesota State Arts Board.

Marco is currently Music Director of Opera on the Lake and Bold North Baroque Opera. He is also Associate Artistic Director of the Bach Society of Minnesota. Previous conducting positions include Winter Opera St. Louis, Chicago Summer Opera, Miami Classical Music Festival, Oberlin in Italy, and The Miami Symphony Orchestra.

Born in Nicaragua and raised in Miami, Marco began studying violin at the age of 11. He is currently based in Minneapolis.



**Moira Villiard  
(she/her)**

Through public art collaborations across Minnesota, Moira Villiard is a multidisciplinary artist with a mixed Indigenous and settler heritage who uses art to

uplift underrepresented narratives, explore the nuance of society's historical community intersections, and promote community healing spaces.

Moira (pronounced "Miri") is a dynamic visual artist, proficient in a variety of artistic genres, including portraiture, illustration, graphic and digital design and as a muralist. She is also a community organizer, curator and passionate arts educator concentrating her efforts around issues of equity and justice including: arts access (creating platforms for underrepresented communities within the arts), creative placemaking, environmental sustainability, youth empowerment, and acknowledgment of Indigenous land, culture, and history. Moira grew up on the Fond du Lac Reservation in Cloquet, MN and is a Fond du Lac direct descendant.



**Sequoia Hauck  
(they/them)**

Sequoia Hauck is a Native (Anishinaabe/Hupa) queer multidisciplinary artist based in the Twin Cities on the unceded and ancestral Dakota lands. Sequoia's focus is on creating film,

poetry, and performance art that decolonizes the process of art-making. They make art surrounding the narratives of continuation and resiliency among their communities. They are a graduate from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities with a B.A. in American Indian Studies. Sequoia has worked on and offstage with organizations such as Aniccha Arts, Art Shanty Projects, Exposed Brick Theatre, The Jungle Theater, Māoriland, An Opera Theatre (AOT), Pangea World Theater, Patrick's Cabaret, Poetry and Pie, Rosy Simas Danse, The Southern Theater, Taja Will Ensemble and Turtle Theater Collective. Sequoia's film "Resiliency is Inherited" was in the 2022 North by North International Film Festival along with the film they created in collaboration with Taja Will, "LÍNEAS de SANGRE". [www.sequoiahauck.com](http://www.sequoiahauck.com)



**Thomas Draskovic  
(Čhetán Ohítika-  
Brave Hawk)  
(he/him)**

Thomas Draskovic, who's Lakshota name is Čhetán Ohítika (Brave Hawk) is an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Reservation in

South Dakota, and is Húŋkpapa Lakhóta and Wahpé Khúte Dakhóta. Thomas moved to Minnesota in 1996 to attend the University of MN where he received a B.A. in American Indian Studies and received his M.A. Ed in Differentiated Instruction from Concordia University, St. Paul campus in 2016. Thomas has been working for the Twin Cities Indian Community in both schools and non-profit community Indian agencies for the past 22 years. In his spare time, Thomas enjoys writing songs and playing music with the all Native rock band, Pretendians. He is attracted to art forms such as acting, painting, writing short stories and drawing, and is also a traditional dancer and powwow singer!

Thomas has been active in the twin cities acting community since the fall of 2018, when he made his stage debut as Big Chief Bromden in a Chameleon Theatre Circle production of One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. He has been active ever since in productions for the New Native Theatre both live, in person and online readings. Thomas has also been a part of public readings of the History Theater's production; The Dakota Project, in the role of Chief Little Crow. He continues to contribute the local Indigenous educational and creative arts scene in an effort to provide a space where we all can thrive, learn, teach, and live as a family together, as we are all related.



# Thank you

To all the foundations and individuals that believed in this creation as much as we do and gave a special gift to make this creation a reality.

Anonymous x2

Ada Dong

Andrew &  
Sunshine Eggum

Anthony Potts

Chandler &  
Tricia Molbert

Chris & Gary Park

Christianne & Eric Lind

Cynthia Chapman

Dan Nelson & Katie Parker

George & Rita Mills

George Mills &  
Barclay Woodbury

Judy Bond

Katherine Hayes

Kelley Jewett &  
Kristi Adams

Kelley Lindquist

KrisAnne Weiss

Kristie Shaffer

Liam Moore

Mari & Tom Eggum

Maria Welz

Marianne Sadée

Maureen Conway

Micha McDonald

Patricia Kent

Seth Johnson &  
Erin Armentrout

Thomas & Corinna Bakken

Wendy Holmes &  
David Frank

Yunyue Liu &

Marco Real-d'Arbelles



**First Peoples Fund**

This project is made possible with financial support from First Peoples Fund, a national values-based organization that honors and supports the Collective Spirit® of First Peoples artists and culture bearers.



DULUTH SUPERIOR AREA  
**COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**

*Private giving for the public good.*

This production is supported by the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation with the John T. and Elizabeth C. Adams Arts Fund.



This engagement is supported by the Arts Midwest GIG Fund, a program of Arts Midwest that is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.



Philanthropy that Heals - Good Relatives Collaborative (GRC) believes lasting change is achieved when our communities have ownership of both solutions and resources they have determined best address the opportunities and challenges they have identified.



**BUILDING AMERICA®**

This production was made possible thanks to the support of the Union Pacific Foundation.

It takes a lot of help and generous people to the little AOT train chugging along. Thank you for the extra love and support from these community members in going above and beyond to make this production possible!

Anne Ewers  
Breanna Boyce  
Deanna Stands  
Edwin Buck Jr. Veterans  
Memorial Buffalo Project  
Emily Urban  
Erica Chua  
Fyrne Schlenker  
Hunter Jaakola

Kennesey Western Boy  
Laura Bonnin  
Lori Marchand  
Maria Dively  
Mark Nerenhausen  
Mary Anne Quiroz  
Mary Quinn McCallum  
Mitch Bercier  
Nia Navarro

Pauline Lanz  
Prairie Island Indian  
Community  
Ruti Mejia  
Samantha Groh  
Taja Will  
Tina DeLisle  
Yankton Sioux Tribe/  
Ihaktowa Dakota Oyate



**This is just the beginning of *Minagi kin Dowan: a Zitkala-Sa opera*. There is still time to add your fingerprint to this creation - be part of growing it and help us share her story with as many people as possible! Make a donation to help us bring it into schools and share it with communities all across the country.**

**[Click here to make a donation](#)**

*An Opera Theatre is a 501c3 non-profit organization. All donations are fully tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.*

Questions about making a donation?  
Contact us at [info@anoperatheatre.org](mailto:info@anoperatheatre.org)

# Thank you for coming aboard the AOT community!

An Opera Theatre (AOT) was founded in 2018 with the vision of creating a company that inspires community engagement by utilizing local MN artists of the highest caliber and presenting opera theatre works focused on social justice and community action. The two main beliefs of AOT are that art should break down societal, financial, and cultural barriers, and that art should always be of the people and for the people.

With the help of an Artist Initiative Grant from the MN State Arts Board, founder Kelly M Turpin and a group of dedicated donors made this vision a reality in 2018 with AOT's inaugural production, *The Consul*, which focused on themes of immigration with Community Partner The Advocates for Human Rights. Since then, AOT has gone on to become a staple of the Twin Cities arts scene with productions such as the show-stopping *DIVAS & DRAG* (June 2019), *WE OUT: Voicing Our Truth* (July 2020), new commissions *The Sky Where You Are* (October 2020) which was inducted into the Library of Congress in February 2021 and *In the Midst of Things: In Medias Res* which premiered to 1,002 high school students in May 2021.

AOT actively engages communities both inside and outside the venue. At our productions, audiences can take part in post-show roundtable discussions with local organizations. Outside the venue, AOT hosts Voice Lab, a free monthly-facilitated peer-to-peer workshop for all singers, regardless of genre and ability. Our education immersion program at LEAP International High School and South High School replaces the standard historical focus of opera education programs with a focus on storytelling, authentic expression, movement, and sharing.



## Board of Directors

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